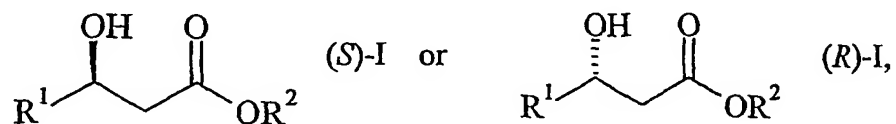


### Abstract Of The Disclosure

A process for the preparation of enantiomerically pure (S)- or (R)-4-halo-3-hydroxybutyrates of formula (I):



wherein R<sup>1</sup> is CH<sub>2</sub>X, CHX<sub>2</sub> or CX<sub>3</sub> and X independently represents Cl and/or Br and wherein R<sup>2</sup> is C<sub>1-6</sub>-alkyl, C<sub>3-8</sub>-cycloalkyl, aryl or aralkyl, and each aryl or aralkyl is optionally further substituted with one or more C<sub>1-4</sub>-alkyl groups and/or halogen atoms, by asymmetric hydrogenation of 4-halo-3-oxobutyric acid esters of formula (II):



wherein R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and X are as defined above in the presence of a catalyst of a ruthenium complex of a chiral ligand of formula (III):

